

# CALIFORNIA OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES



## LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



### WHAT DOES A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT DO?

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS design and plan outdoor spaces. They are responsible for the overall design and detailed plans for a wide range of projects in outdoor spaces including industrial and office parks, land subdivisions, parks and recreational areas, as well as master plans for management of forested lands. Their work falls into the general categories of site design and planning, environmental planning, and land management and resource analysis.

Landscape Architects perform the following tasks:

- Analyze location, climate, soil, vegetation, drainage, structures, visual qualities, proposed use,

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feasibility studies, and the preservation of critical natural resources.

- Create preliminary designs and prepare site plans showing grading and drainage; existing trees and plants; placement of new plantings; and the proposed location of structures, roads, parking areas, lighting, and irrigation.
- Prepare models and other graphic aids, such as sketches and diagrams, to help clients visualize the total design.
- Prepare working drawings, cost estimates, and detailed instructions regarding dimensions, workmanship, and materials for construction of designed elements.
- Observe the construction and new planting work to ensure its proper completion as the project progresses.
- Prepare Environmental Impact Statements or Reports for projects that may significantly alter the environment.

Landscape Architects that work in large private firms and government agencies are responsible for administration of parks and forests. Specialized tasks may include the following:

- Inventory the scenic quality of the land and changes that occur due to human use.
- Analyze uses a landscape can undergo before being adversely affected.
- Analyze the potential effects of timber planting and harvest, fire management, and establishment of thermal and wind power facilities.

### WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Landscape Architects should be creative and analytical, able to visualize spatial relationships, and interested in design and environmental planning. Communication and marketing skills are important because they must be able to sell or promote

their ideas and concepts, produce written reports, and give oral presentations. Landscape Architects with excellent drafting and design skills, a good educational background, practical experience, and excellent communication and marketing skills will have the best opportunities for finding work.

Other skills, knowledge, and abilities important to the field of Landscape Architecture include:

- Design – Knowledge of design techniques, tools, and principles involved in production of precision technical plans, blueprints, drawings, and models.
- Mathematics – Knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.
- Engineering and Technology – Knowledge of the practical application of engineering science and technology. This includes applying principles, techniques, procedures, and equipment to the design and production of various goods and services.
- Administration and Management – Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership techniques, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
- Biology – Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
- Visualization – The ability to imagine how something will look after it is moved around or when its parts are moved or rearranged.
- Critical Thinking – Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
- Technology – Use computer software programs to communicate design ideas.
- Active Listening – Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

Landscape Architects use management skills to oversee all phases of design and construction. They need leadership skills to gain public and private support for projects.

## WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Most Landscape Architects work in offices where they spend much of their time at drawing boards. They use computers for both design and resource analysis. They spend extensive periods out of the office to conduct site studies, consult with clients, and inspect construction sites. Most projects involve working with architects, engineers, surveyors, and contractors. Therefore, Landscape Architects must possess working knowledge of these other professions to incorporate their ideas and findings into project plans. The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) is the organization that represents the profession of Landscape Architects in the United States.

### ***Union Membership***

Union membership is available to those Landscape Architects who work for government agencies.

## WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department (EDD) Labor Market Information Division (LMID):

Estimated number of workers in 2000:	2,400
Estimated number of workers in 2010:	3,300
Projected Growth 2000-2010:	37.5%
Est. openings due to separations by 2010	200

*These figures do not include self-employment.*

In 2001, the Landscape Architects Technical Committee (LATC) of the California Architects Board in the Department of Consumer Affairs listed 2,873 active licenses for Landscape Architects. The number of licensed Landscape Architects is greater than the above projections figure since self-employed workers are not included in projections data. This is consistent with national data for Landscape Architects that show about 40 percent are self-employed. In

addition to the licensed professionals, a substantial number of trained but unlicensed workers are employed under the supervision of licensed Landscape Architects to gain the experience necessary to qualify for the State licensing examination.

### Trends

The demand for services of Landscape Architects has increased in response to public interest in protecting the environment, improving quality of life, and historic preservation. The construction boom in recent years has created a high demand for landscape architectural services.

## WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

### California Earnings

#### Landscape Architects 2002 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$16.02	to	\$34.50
Average hourly wage	\$29.02		
Average annual wage	\$60,372		

Source: *Occupational Employment Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID*.

### Hours

Most salaried Landscape Architects work a 40-hour week. Overtime is common during project deadlines.

### Benefits

Benefits generally include vacation and sick leave. Health insurance is at least partially paid by the employer. Some firms offer profit sharing and bonus plans.

## HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

### Education and Training

A bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture (BLA or BSLA) is the usual educational requirement for this profession. Five universities in California offer degree programs in Landscape Architecture. Two campuses of the University of

California Extension offer certificate programs that allow students to meet the educational requirements through evening and weekend classes. Three community colleges offer associate degrees in landscape architecture. The LATC Web site of the California Architects Board, [www.latc.dca.ca.gov](http://www.latc.dca.ca.gov), lists schools offering degrees or certificates in landscape architecture and their accreditation status.

### Licensing and Certification

Landscape Architects responsible for the approval of plans and drawings must be licensed by the Department of Consumer Affairs' LATC. A candidate must have six years of combined education and work experience to take the licensing exam. The length of work experience depends upon the type of degree program completed. Candidates with a BLA or BSLA degree or certificate must have two or more years of work experience. Candidates with an associate degree must have five years of work experience. The work experience requirement for candidates with degrees from programs accredited by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB) is a year shorter than those from unaccredited programs.

### Continuing Education

There are no continuing education requirements for license renewal.

## HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Employers are especially interested in hiring applicants with excellent skills in drafting and graphics. It is important, therefore, to compile a well-organized portfolio with examples of recent designs and drawings to present during job interviews.

Landscape architectural firms and engineering or architectural consultants are the major employers of Landscape Architects. Some also work for the government, primarily those involved with planning for parks, transportation, and urban and regional areas.

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. The yellow pages list private firms under the following headings: Landscape Architects, Landscape Contractors, Landscape Designers and Consultants. California job openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBS<sup>SM</sup> at [www.caljobs.ca.gov](http://www.caljobs.ca.gov) or at America's Job Bank at [www.ajb.dni.us](http://www.ajb.dni.us).

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at [www.calmis.ca.gov](http://www.calmis.ca.gov). Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office [www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm](http://www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm) or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, [www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop](http://www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop).

### WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Many Landscape Architects begin their careers as junior designers. Typical lines of advancement are from junior, to intermediate, to senior drafter/designer, to job captain, to senior designer or planner/project manager. Some Landscape Architects become a principal of the firm in which they work. Others start their own private firms.

### OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

California Architects Board  
Landscape Architects Technical Committee  
400 R Street, Suite 4000  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-4954  
[www.latc.dca.ca.gov](http://www.latc.dca.ca.gov)

American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736  
(202) 898-2444  
[www.asla.org](http://www.asla.org)

Employment Projections by Occupation  
[www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm)

Employment and Wages by Occupation  
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

### RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Civil Engineers	No. 39
Surveyors	No. 106
Interior Designers	No. 189
Architects	No. 210
Horticulturists	No. 396

### OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

<b>SOC</b> ( <i>Standard Occupational Classification</i> ) Landscape Architects	17-1012
<b>O*NET</b> ( <i>Occupational Information Network</i> ) Landscape Architects	17-1012.00
<b>OES</b> ( <i>Occupational Employment Statistics</i> ) Landscape Architects	22308
<b>DOT</b> ( <i>Dictionary of Occupational Titles</i> ) Landscape Architect (profess. & kin.)	001.061-018